

INTERVIEW

of

Comrade POL POT

**Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Kampuchea
Prime Minister of the Government of
Democratic Kampuchea**

to the

**Delegation of Yugoslav Journalists
in Visit to Democratic Kampuchea**

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First question: Respected comrade Pol Pot, you are going, soon, to celebrate the third anniversary of the liberation of your country. Please tell us what are the outstanding achievements in national edification during these past three years.

Answer: It is a pleasure for me to answer your question. During these nearly past three years, we have got a number of satisfactory results in the restoration and edification of our country. But, first of all, I would like to say that we still have a lot of work to do.

The first outstanding result is that we have solved the agricultural problems, especially in rice-growing. To have the problem of rice production solved means to have enough rice to feed our people. In 1976, we planned to get a yield of 3 tons of paddy per hectare. We achieved 80 to 90 per cent of this objective, which allowed us to solve the living conditions of our people and also to export rice. In 1977, we planned a yield of 4 tons of paddy per hectare for one crop and of 8 tons per hectare for two crops a year. We fulfilled this plan at nearly 100 per cent. Therefore, in 1977, we had a paddy production higher than that in 1976. We could then improve the living conditions of our people and export more rice.

Our slogan says: "If we have rice, we can have everything", because our people can eat their fill,

we have rice to export and we can import the products we need. The results achieved in the agricultural production lay on the basis of the friendship between our two countries and peoples. Like Kampuchea, Yugoslavia is a non-aligned country and has always resolutely defended its independence. Therefore, the friendship between our two countries lays on a same basis.

We have respect and affection for comrade President Tito and the friendly peoples of Yugoslavia. Comrade President Tito and Yugoslav peoples have always extended to us support and aid. We have great sympathy for President Tito and the peoples of Yugoslavia. We would like to express to them our thanks.

I was in Yugoslavia. It was in 1950, in Zagreb, in a brigade of workers. So, I feel great sympathy for President Tito and the Yugoslav peoples.

You are now in Kampuchea as friends. The elimination of the illiteracy which was a blemish in the former society. In Kampuchea, we have high schools, secondary schools and primary schools in the cities. But the majority of the people in the countryside were illiterate. Now, we have fundamentally solved this problem. Our people can read and write. That is the basis which allows our people to progressively increase their cultural level. It is not only a part of the society but the entire people who can learn and study. We rely on these bases to further develop our education and schooling.

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Our slogan says: "If we have rice, we can have everything", because our people can eat their fill,

we have rice to export and we can import the products we need. The results achieved in the agricultural production lay on the bases of the fundamental hydraulic projects that we have already achieved. The hydraulic projects are an important result to ensure in the future, the agricultural and rice production. We have solved the agricultural problem and from these bases, the other sectors, like industry, cottage industry, cultural and social sectors, can also be developed.

Another outstanding result is that we have eliminated malaria which was a scourge for more than 80 per cent of our compatriots. In the past, every year, the number of the people suffered of malaria were very high and they faced many difficulties in their work. Now, we have eliminated malaria at 90 per cent. So, the living conditions of our people have been considerably improving in the domain of health.

Another outstanding result is the basic elimination of the illiteracy which was a blemish in the former society. In that society there were indeed, faculties, high schools, secondary schools and primary schools in the cities. But the majority of the people in the countryside were illiterate. Now, we have fundamentally solved this problem. Our people can read and write. That is the basis which allows our people to progressively increase their cultural level. It is not only a part of the society but the entire people who can learn and study. We rely on these bases to further develop our education and schooling.

As for the other results, they are less important, but I would like to tell you that we have established and developed a sanitary network throughout the country. Each cooperative has its own medical center and its own center of making traditional, national and popular medicines. That has then allowed us to greatly improve the health of the people. The present situation is different from that in the old days. Previously, there were doctors only in Phnom Penh and in the big cities. Now, we have doctors all over throughout the country, in all cooperatives and even in the most remote areas of the country. The level of these medical men is still at the elementary stage, but relying on this basis, we will progressively develop their skills.

Concerning the cottage industry and workshops, there is no spectacular achievement. But, everywhere we have established a network of workshops. Every cooperative has its own cottage industry and workshops. They are the bases to further develop our cottage industry and lead it progressively towards industrialization.

These are a number of outstanding results. They have been achieved thanks to our people's endeavors under the leadership of our Communist Party of Kampuchea. The people work with their own hands, see with their own eyes the results of their works and they have enthusiastically enjoyed them.

Second question: During our short stay in your beautiful country, we have had some evidences that your revolution radically cut off from the past. What model of society are you building up now ?

Answer: We have no model in building up our new society.

The Special National Congress held at the end of April 1975 clearly specified the determinant role in the revolution, in the national liberation war, played by the worker and peasant people, who form the overwhelming majority of the people. It is this worker and peasant people who have endured the heaviest burden in the revolution. It is then this same worker and peasant people who must enjoy the most the gains of the revolution, at present and in the future. The preamble of our Constitution has also stipulated this point. Our aspiration is to edify a society where happiness, prosperity and equality prevail for everybody, a society where there are neither exploiting class nor exploited class, neither exploiting people nor exploited people, and where everybody participates in production works and national defence. It is on these bases and goal that we are edifying our new society. So, the edification of the new society is undertaken in conformity with the aspirations of the entire people, especially those of the worker and peasant people who are the overwhelming majority of the population. If the people consider that the edification of this society is being on the correct way, then they would carry on this way. On the contrary, if they are not satisfied with, they would then decide differently. That would depend on them to decide.

According to our experiences, we totally rely on our people, in the revolution as well as in the national liberation war.

If the people undertake to do something by themselves, everything can be achieved, but if not, we could achieve nothing at their place. That is to say that we have no pre-established model of a new society. We edify our society in conformity with the aspirations of our people as being stipulated in the preamble of the Democratic Kampuchea Constitution.

Third question: As we have seen at this stage of your revolution, you have mobilized all your national forces to develop agriculture. Would you have any intention to develop also industry? And how would you establish the technical basis, that is to say how are you going to train the necessary cadres for this orientation, because for the moment, at our knowledge, you have neither university nor technical school?

Answer: We have our objectives and plannings to quickly develop our industry. By relying on agriculture, we endeavour to develop industry. In order to have an independent economy we must develop agriculture, industry, cottage industry and other sectors. It is thus an orientation to which we are paying great attention. But, to edify industry, where could we find the capital? We

rely on agriculture. For example, we have established trade relations with Yugoslavia. We export agricultural products and we import industrial products, at one and the same time for the needs of agriculture and industry. In the parallel direction with that, we have a policy to quickly train many national technicians.

If we speak about universities, faculties and colleges like in the old days, there would seem to you of non-existence. But, we have trained our technical cadres from the basis. In the cooperatives, there are many specialized workshops where studies are closely linked to the production works. It is likewise in the factories, in Phnom Penh as well as in the provinces. Before liberation, there were a number of graduates, educated in Phnom Penh, in provinces or at abroad. But, as concrete results in the movement of cottage industry and industry, they had served with less efficiency than the national technicians coming from the basis can do at present. According to this experience, we have trained our technicians from the basis and we have progressively developed their technical skills. They participate in the production works and have gained concrete experiences -positive or negative- which permit them to move forward.

Before liberation, some of you had been for several times in Kampuchea. At that time, there were very few national technicians, there were many more foreign technicians. Now, we are attaching great importance to the training of national technicians. As concrete results of our training system, let's take an example in

the field of hydraulic projects. On the Prek Tnot river, while nothing has been achieved for many years, in 1976-1977, we have built 5 dams. Therefore, with concrete practice we can draw concrete experiences, and we assess that if we had to wait for a long time, we could not serve in due time the movement of agricultural production, solve and improve the standard of living of our people.

Let us take more examples. Now, we produce husking-machines and threshing-machines, hydraulic pumps completely by ourselves. We produce them also with imported engines. These machines are manufactured by our technicians. Previously, they could not be produced in the country. All of them must be imported from abroad.

In brief, we pay great attention to this problem of industrial development and to the training of our national technicians. We shall develop the level of their knowledge by our own means. We think that we can do so at a certain degree. In combining closely the studies with the concrete practice, they have progressively gained more experiences. Then, they will go to friendly countries for training so that they could improve their scientific and technical knowledges. These are the principles on which we rely, but we will send our trainees only to friendly countries.

Fourth question: We have seen that your cities have no population. Could you explain us what is the objective of this operation? Why have you abolished the role of the money, the salary system, the trade network? Would it be a passing orientation in the social and revolutionary transformation of your society or a model of society that you are really pursuing in building up?

Answer: There are many reasons which led us to evacuate the population from Phnom Penh and other cities.

The first reason was an economic one, that is to ensure food supply for many millions inhabitants in the cities. After having taken the problem into much consideration, we came to the conclusion that we could not solve this problem as long as such numerous population remained in the cities. But, if we evacuated this population to the countryside, in the cooperatives, the latter could feed them for they have rice-fields, instruments of production and everything they needed. We had cooperatives which could receive this population from the cities by letting them participate in rice-growing thanks to their oxen, buffaloes and instruments of production. In the countryside, the conditions were favorable for us while in the cities they were not favorable. Then, in order to solve the food problem, it was necessary to evacuate the population to the countryside. It is only when we can solve the food problem that the people have confidence in the revolution. If in the cities, the popu-

lation died by starvation, they would not have any confidence in the revolution. Such was the economic reason.

But relating to this economic problem, there was the problem of defence and security of the country. Before liberation, we already knew the plan of defeat of the US imperialists and their lackeys. According to this plan, after our victory and when we entered into Phnom Penh, they would create difficulties to us in Phnom Penh, in the political, military, economic and other fields in order to destroy our revolution. Therefore, taking this situation into consideration, we evacuated the cities population to the countryside, in the cooperatives, in order to solve the food problem and, at the same time, to crush beforehand the US imperialists' plan so that they could not attack us when we entered into Phnom Penh. Thus, the cities were not evacuated through a pre-established plan but they were in conformity with the situation at that time, that were the shortage of foodstuffs, the necessity to solve this problem for the population, and the US imperialists' and their lackeys' plan aiming at destroying our revolution and taking back the power.

Concerning the function of the money, the salary and trade systems, I would like to tell you as follows:

In 1970 - 1971, we already liberated 75 to 80 per cent of our country. At that time, we had the

political and military power, but not the economic power. The economy was in the hands of landlords and capitalists. Thus, these latter amassed up the whole production for they had money. In the liberated areas, we fixed the price of paddy at 30 riels a tao (12 kilograms), the price at which the population must sell the paddy to the revolutionary power. But, the landlords and tradesmen bought it at 100 to 200 riels a tao and then they sold it to the Lon Nol clique. As for us, we had nothing. The population faced many difficulties in food supply. It was the same for our army. These difficulties had affected our national liberation war. After having well examined this situation, we decided to establish cooperatives so that they could take in hands the economy, the agricultural production in the countryside, the management, distribution, supply system and the exchanges between cooperatives on one hand and on the other hand between cooperatives and the State. That is why we could take in hands the agricultural production and solve the problems of living conditions of the people. The people were enthusiastic and sent their sons and daughters to join the Army to fight against the enemy. When the cooperatives helped one another and developed their exchanges of products between themselves, the function of the money had been progressively reduced. In 1974, it was reduced by 80 per cent. Before liberation, only the State used money. It used it to buy various products in the areas not yet liberated for the needs of the liberated areas under its control. After these experiences, we asked for the people's opinion who judged that money

had no utility for the cooperatives already succeeded in handling the exchange of products between themselves. Therefore, at that time, in the liberated areas, which had extended over more than 90 per cent of the country, with nearly 6 millions inhabitants, we had already solved this problem. When the population of the cities were evacuated to the countryside, they were fully taken in charge by the cooperatives. This practice led us to give up the use of money up to now. What will be the situation in the future? That would depend on our people. If the people judge it is necessary to go back and use money, we shall do so. But, if the people consider it is not necessary to use money, they will then decide accordingly. Therefore, in the future this problem would depend on the concrete situation. That is why we have told you that we have no mould or pre-established model. That would depend on the development of the people's revolutionary movement and the progressively acquired experiences.

Concerning the salary system, there were also habits acquired in the past. In the revolutionary movement, especially during the national liberation war, there was no salary both among the cadres and in the army. As for the inhabitants, they also had no salary. Before liberation, in the liberated areas, cadres, army, population, that is nearly 6 millions inhabitants, had already used to live without salary. We have noticed that in the old days, the majority of our people had no salary. Only the functionaries had salary. Therefore, with these

acquired habits, the population of the cities incorporated themselves in the cooperatives, the military and civil cadres, men and women fighters and workers have continued to live following the regime of supply in practice during the war. We consider that this practice has avoided a heavy burden on the people and allowed us to keep this money mainly for national defence and edification. What will be the situation in the future? That would depend on the concrete situation and the people.

Concerning the trade network, the State and cooperatives co-operate with each other to organize it. The State gathers cooperative productions and distributes them throughout the country or exports them abroad. The State imports the products from abroad to distribute them throughout the country. So far, we have done so. Those are the practices acquired during the war. What will be the situation in the future? That would depend also on the concrete situation. That is why we have not determined that it is definitive or provisional. We have acted following the concrete situation and we continue to do so. The people are the fundamental factor.

Fifth question: If we have understood well, Democratic Kampuchea faces many problems and difficulties of all kinds with her neigh-

hours. What is your opinion and how could you solve these problems and overcome the present difficulties ?

Answer: Like all the newly liberated countries, Democratic Kampuchea has to face difficulties. That is normal. As far as I know, in the history, the difficulties of Kampuchea are not as great as those faced by some newly liberated countries. But, it is a fact that Democratic Kampuchea has difficulties.

The main difficulty is that we have abode by the position of independence, sovereignty and self-reliance and of deciding by ourselves our own destiny. This position runs counter to some countries, that is the expansionists and the imperialists. But we assess that in abiding by this position of independence, sovereignty and self-reliance our difficulties are less serious than those that we would face if the nation and the people of Kampuchea were subjugated or disappeared. Therefore, we prefer to stand by our position of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, of non-alignment, of deciding by ourselves our own destiny in overcoming all obstacles.

How to solve these difficulties ? This problem would depend on the factors of our side and those of the opposing side. We have successively

sought to solve this problem through meetings and negotiations. Immediately after liberation, in June 1975, myself and other comrades leaders, we had been to Hanoi. We decided to go and showed our goodwill in seeking to solve the problems existing since a long time. There were many problems but there was one problem, the problem of border to be discussed. We said that Kampuchea wants only to live in peace and, in order to preserve, develop and strengthen the friendship between our two countries and peoples, she considers as State borders between the two countries the present borders that Vietnam has solemnly recognized in 1965 - 1967 and committed itself to respect them. We have not claimed our former territories. We have not also claimed our former islands. We have not claimed even an inch of territory. The Vietnamese did not deign to reply for they have fostered greater ambitions, that is to take possession of the whole Kampuchea under the form of "Indochina Federation" by sending every year many hundreds of thousands or millions of Vietnamese to come and install themselves in Kampuchea. In 30 years or more, the people of Kampuchea would become a national minority. That is very clear.

In May 1976, we invited the Vietnamese to come and negotiate in Phnom Penh. At first, they did not want to come. When they arrived, they said that they were coming because we had insisted on inviting them to come. During the negotiations, Vietnam has rejected the borders that it has recognized in 1965 and 1967 and that it has

committed itself to respect. Vietnam told us that in 1966 it agreed with Kampuchea for at that time it needed to fight against the US imperialists. Therefore, it was a dupery. Furthermore, Vietnam has proposed a new borderline cutting off a great part of our territorial waters. For us, that is expansionism and annexationism. That is no friendship. Because we are small, Vietnam has exerted pressure on us. But we have not accepted it and the negotiations had not then led to any result.

In the parallel direction with these negotiations, the Vietnamese continued to attack us along the border aiming at forcing us to comply with. But we have always refused. After having waged a hard struggle against the imperialists and their lackeys, we cannot accept to be slaves of Vietnam. Neither our people nor our Army can accept it.

Now, how to solve this problem? We will solve it in according to the concrete situation. If Vietnam really respects our independence and sovereignty, if Vietnam fosters a genuine friendship with us, there would be no difficulties in solving the problem. This problem could be solved at once. But if Vietnam stubbornly wants to take possession of Kampuchea, we must defend our independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. But we consider that our difficulties will evolve and could be solved progressively.

First of all, we have mobilized our forces to resolutely defend our independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. To this end, the entire people are united and have redoubled their endeavours to increase production, improve their standard of living, increase exportations in order to accumulate more and more capital for national defence and edification.

At the same time, we think that the Democratic Kampuchea's friends in the world stand by our side and their number has been further increased. We are of the opinion that there are a lot of countries which cherish independence and some of them have a firm position of independence. Yugoslavia is an example. These independence - and - justice - loving countries progressively and clearly discern those who are right from those who are wrong, those who want peace and friendship from those who are expansionists and aggressors.

We think the situation evolves in a direction more and more favorable for us. Thus, those who want to aggress and annex Kampuchea will be progressively aware of that they cannot do so. At that time, the problem would be solved. But we must continue to face this present situation.

Sixth question: In the world, they write a lot with or without reason that your country is very closed. Would you have any intention to further open your country to the world? On what principles and in what direction?

Answer: Since liberation, we have progressively received friends. After liberation, we had to solve many problems, we had to organize our country, solve the problem of the living conditions of our people, that is we had to arrange our country, our home. And our friends came one after another. We are convinced that in the future, more friends will come. In 1975, some of them came. In 1976, there were more. In 1977, there were more than in 1976. In 1978, many more friends will come to our country. In the future, they will be more and more. We open our country to our friends. We shall invite and welcome more and more friends to our home, to our country. And we shall further develop and strengthen our friendship with all friendly peoples and countries.

As for personages and organizations that have shown their friendship and their spirit of justice towards Kampuchea, we have invited them to pay a visit to our country and we shall invite more of them. We are convinced that more and more friends will come and pay a visit to our country. But we must also arrange and embellish our home to receive our guests. You have paid a visit to our country, you have seen with your own eyes the devas-

tations caused by the war. Those who have not seen Phnom Penh during the war would think that it was safe. Phnom Penh was not like it is today. Immediately after liberation, Phnom Penh was very dirty and there were everywhere networks of strongholds and barbed wire. Now, we have removed and cleaned them out.

Seventh question: The relations between Democratic Kampuchea and Socialist Yugoslavia appear in friendship and cooperation. What possibilities would you find to speed up this cooperation and to extend the collaboration between our two friendly countries?

Answer: Democratic Kampuchea and Yugoslavia are friendly countries and this friendship is based on the policy of non-alignment and independence. On this basis, we have ties of solid friendship to develop and strengthen our relations in all fields in the future. The relations in various fields have been developed and strengthened according to the possibilities of our two countries. As far as Kampuchea is concerned, we are striving to build up our country, increase our production and develop our trade exchanges with Yugoslavia. At present, our agricultural production cannot yet meet with all the demands of the friendly Yugoslavia. For example, in case of rubber, we produce some quantity but the quality is not equal. We are striving to improve the quality of our production in order to increase our

exchanges with Yugoslavia. Concerning the other fields, we progressively set up cooperation relations in according to the possibilities of our two countries. We think that the prospects of this cooperation are favorable for it does not lay only on the trade and economic relations, but also on an excellent political basis of friendship.

Eighth question: Upon our return, we would like to present to our readers and tele-viewers the results, successes and preoccupations of Democratic Kampuchea and the leaders of this friendly and non-aligned country. That is why our last question is:

Who are you, comrade Pol Pot ?

What is the past record of the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kampuchea ?

Answer: I am pleased to answer your question. But, first of all, I would like to tell you that my role and that of other comrades leaders represent only a small part of the national movement of Kampuchea, of the revolutionary movement of the Kampuchea's people.

I am from a peasant family, during my childhood, I lived with my parents and helped them in their agricultural works. But after, according to the customs, I lived in a pagoda to learn how to read and write. I spent

six years in pagoda and I had been a monk for two years.

You are the first people to know my biography.

When I grew up, I attended the primary school and after this school, I could not immediately attend the secondary school because I did not pass the examination. I went back to the agricultural works to my parents. Only after that, I passed the examination for entering the secondary school. I finished my secondary education and I attended the technical secondary school. The studies lasted more than one year. There were general technical studies, especially in electricity. After successfully passing the examination I received a scholarship to continue my studies abroad, in France.

In the first year, I studied with diligence. I was passably good student. Then I militated in the movement of the progressist students and I had not enough time to study. Two years after, as I neglected my studies, the authorities cut off my scholarship. I had then to come back home.

I joined the underground movement of struggle in Phnom Penh. After that, I joined the maquis to participate in the struggle against French colonialists.

After the Geneva Agreements in 1954, I came back to Phnom Penh and carried on my underground activities. In the current life, I was professor of history, geography and civics in a private school. I have contacted

with various circles. I militated in the pupils, students and intellectuals' circles, in the workers' circles and also in the peasants' circles.

In 1963, I could not stay anymore in Phnom Penh. I had to join the maquis. I was not very well-known to the public. But the Lon Nol's police followed my activities. They knew me but they did not know exactly who I was. In Phnom Penh, I was the general responsible of the movement in the capital. I was also in charge of the liaisons with the countryside.

I joined the maquis in 1963 and I came back to Phnom Penh on April 24, 1975.

In 1960, the Congress of the Party elected me as member of the Central Committee and member of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Party.

In 1961, I was Deputy-Secretary of the Standing Committee.

In 1962, our comrade Secretary of the Party was secretly assassinated by the enemy. I assumed then the function of acting Secretary.

In 1963, the Second Congress of the Party elected me as Secretary. And the following Congresses confirmed me successively in my charges.

In the countryside, I stayed mainly in the most remote areas. I travelled all over the country. I know fairly well my people, the geographical and economic situation of my country. My backing base was in

the region of the national minorities, that is in the North-East region. I know perfectly these national minorities. They were very miserable. They wore only a very small pagne. They had no salt to eat. Now, one cannot distinguish them from the other people. They wear the same dress and live like everyone. They have enough rice, salt, medicines and other products. Their conditions of living have been considerably improved.

I would like to tell you about a particular fact. In 1950, when I was student abroad, I was in a brigade of workers in Zagreb for more than one month during my vacation. I had contacts with Yugoslav peoples and I attended the Yugoslav folkloric performances. So, from that time I had ties of friendship with the Yugoslav peoples.